

P24196.A01

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants : Nobumasa SUZUKI et al.

Appln. No. : 10/659,302

Filed : September 11, 2003

For : ROD FIXING APPARATUS FOR VERTEBRA CONNECTING MEMBER



Group Art Unit: 3732

Examiner:

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir :

In accordance with the duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. §1.56, §1.97-1.98, Applicants hereby call the following documents to the Examiner's attention:

Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 11-509453, published on August 24, 1999, along with an English language Abstract thereof and English language patent family member U.S. Patent No. 5,984,923 to BREARD, issued on November 16, 1999. Applicants note that the Japanese document is discussed on page 2 of the specification of the instant application; and

U.S. Patent No. 6,620,164 to UEYAMA et al., issued on September 16, 2003.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the above materials and cite the patent documents. Copies of the above-noted documents are attached and have been listed on a PTO-1449 Form which is also attached hereto. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to initial the appropriate spaces on the attached PTO-1449 Form and to return a copy of the Form to the Applicants with the next official communication in the present application to confirm

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consideration of these documents.

Applicants also bring to the Examiner's attention the following copending and commonly assigned patent applications:

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/382,504 to UEYAMA et al., entitled "Rod for Cervical Vertebra and Connecting System Thereof", filed on March 7, 2003; and

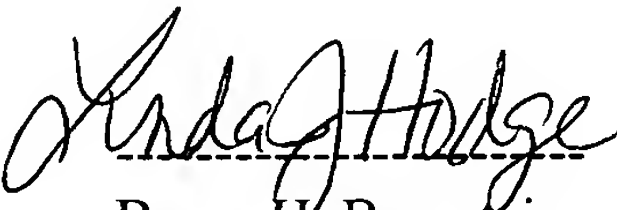
U.S. Patent Application No. 10/382,507 to UEYAMA et al., entitled "Rod for Cervical Vertebra and Connecting System Thereof", filed on March 7, 2003.

Applicants note that the above-mentioned applications are divisional applications of above-mentioned U.S. Patent 6,620,164.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(2)(iii), copies of the above-mentioned applications are attached hereto. However, the Examiner is also requested to review the file wrapper of these U.S. patent applications at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the references of record, if any, cited therein.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Nobumasa SUZUKI et al.

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December 11, 2003
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